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**1994/01/00**

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CHINA: CTBT/NUCLEAR TESTING

China's Support for a CTBT. In September, shortly before China's October 5 nuclear test, Foreign Minister Qian told you publicly that China would support the negotiation of a CTBT by 1996. (In December talks with Australia, Vice Foreign Minister Liu reportedly suggested that an earlier result might be possible, depending on the attitudes of the other nuclear weapon states.) At the same time, China has refused to join the testing moratorium and apparently intends to complete a series of force modernization tests before it signs a CTBT. This goal will influence China's approach to the pace of negotiations.

Our challenge now is to encourage China's active involvement in the CTBT negotiations as a nuclear weapon state, in consultation with the other Perm-5. China has indicated a willingness to coordinate CTBT positions among the Perm-5, and has offered at some point to host a Perm-5 meeting in Beijing. We have not identified major substantive differences on elements of a CTBT because the Chinese have not yet engaged us in any detail.

No-First-Use/Negative Security Assurances. In December, China proposed Perm-5 negotiations beginning in March on a NFU convention, and discussions among the five on a negative security assurance against using nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states or nuclear weapon free zones. In a December 21 discussion of the proposal with Vice Foreign Minister Liu in Beijing, Ambassador Roy stated that the U.S. could not engage substantively until our nuclear posture review is finished (probably in early summer) but that we would like to better understand China's proposal; Liu promised a future briefing. Under Secretary Davis will be ready to continue exchanges on the issue with Liu during their January 26-27 meetings.

Under Secretary Davis will be prepared to agree to bilateral exchanges on what China has in mind on NFU. On negative security assurances, we will propose to continue discussions in appropriate multilateral fora, such as in the NPT context and at

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the Geneva Conference on Disarmament.

Chinese Testing. In the meantime, China is pursuing an accelerated test series to satisfy the military's minimum requirements for strategic forces modernization, and there is evidence that China plans to suspend testing in 1996. We are unlikely to persuade China not to conduct its next test (probably in the spring). Our past protests have met with a stock reply. Nonetheless, to maintain consistency in our position and to place the onus on China, we should continue to press China to halt its tests.

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